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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

NOVEMBER 25, 2002

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for November 25, 2002. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS  
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2. VILLAGE RETURN FIGURES

(Radikal) Official figures say 380,000 people migrated from Southeastern villages beginning in 1991, when clashes intensified and when village evacuations and burnings became a common practice, due to alleged logistical support to the PKK. According to human rights organizations, as many as three million people may have migrated from their villages, with over 4,000 villages emptied. Villagers who agreed to become village guards were allowed to stay in their villages. According to the Interior Ministry, 51,152 evacuees have returned to 9,082 homes in eleven State of Emergency (OHAL) and adjacent provinces over the past two years under the Village Return Project. However, in a recent Istanbul meeting, Human Rights Watch Turkey Officer Jonathan Sugden indicated the project was far from solving evacuees' problems. Attorneys from the Working Group formed by the Diyarbakir Bar Association petitioned the administrative courts in provinces where evacuees faced difficulties, to initiate prosecution (against local authorities), claiming evacuees' property rights were ignored.

3. MOBILE COMMAND VEHICLE

(Turkiye) The Health Ministry sent a TL 156 billion (approx. USD 100,000) Mobile Command Vehicle to the Diyarbakir Health Directorate to be used under war conditions. Increased activities continue in Diyarbakir due to the possible U.S. operation against Iraq. The vehicle, which includes a digital camera system, 30,000-kilometer wireless system, automatic satellite antenna and telephones, will be sent to the border during such an operation.

4. ANTI-YOK AND ANTI-U.S. PROTESTS

(Evrensel) A group called "the Gaziantep University Democrat Students" held a press conference during which they protested the Higher Education Council (YOK) and the U.S. Several labor unions and political parties supported the protest. The protest ended after the group shouted such slogans as "No to YOK and war," "We want a budget for education, not war" and "We want mother-tongue education." Similar demonstrations were held by the Adana and Tunceli chapters of the Teachers Union Egitim-Sen to protest pressures and exiles facing teachers, war and the IMF.

5. CONTINUED PRO-OCALAN PROTESTS

(Evrensel) Hundreds of Siirt youths staged a demonstration to Protest PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan's isolation by pouring gasoline and burning streets, closing roads to traffic, and shouting pro-Ocalan slogans. Following the demonstration, police took tight security measures. In Bostanici (Van), a group of youths staged a demonstration to mark the anniversary of the founding of the PKK. They marched, shouting the "Freedom to Ocalan" slogan. They then dispersed when police arrived.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS  
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6. BUSINESS WORLD OPTIMISTIC ABOUT GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

(Dunya) Business leaders, including Gaziantep

Organized Industrial Zone President Akif Ekici,  
Gaziantep Commodity Exchange President Omer  
Celik, Southeastern Anatolia Exporters' Union  
President Abdulkadir Cikmaz, Gaziantep Young  
Businessmen's Association (GAGIAD) board member  
Turgut Ercan, Gaziantep Free Zone Corporation  
President Mehmet Ozmen and Mersin Chamber of  
Commerce and Industry President Kadri Saman,  
reacted positively to the new government's  
program announced at the Parliament.  
HOLTZ